

No. 18
Petition of Mer-
chants and o-
thers connected
with the Cana-
da, dated 17th
May 1828.

“and quarrels which, however easy it may be to raise, it will be found exceedingly diffi-
cult to appease.”
Again he adds: “Sir, I have considered the subject a thousand times since I first heard
of this intended division, but have not been able to form any reasonable idea of the
motive which has induced the proposition of such a dangerous experiment: if at any
future period experience should point it out as expedient for the advantage and safety
of Government, or for the general convenience or prosperity of the people, to divide
that country, it may then be done with more judgment, from a more certain knowledge
of the consequences of such a division. The inconveniences that may arise from con-
tinuing the province united under one Legislature are few, and they are well known
and understood: the advantages are unanimity, mutual support and strength; but no
man can tell the dangers of a separation. The dangers, however, to be apprehended
are political weakness, disunion, animosities and quarrels.”

That it is within the knowledge of several of your Petitioners that the above Act had
hardly become a law when the impolicy of the division of the province of Quebec became
apparent to His Majesty's ministers, as was declared by them to the individual who
made the representation from which your Petitioners have now quoted.

That although by the wisdom of the Imperial Parliament an Act was passed in 1822,
intending to set at rest, at least for the moment, the disputes between the two provinces
in regard to duties, for which end the power of determining upon the share of duties to
which Upper Canada may be entitled is taken out of the hands of the two Colonial Le-
gislatures and given to arbitrators, yet as the very passing of such a law implies the ex-
istence of a very great evil, so your Petitioners are well assured that this remedy, viewed
as a permanent measure, would in its execution prove a source of endless dispute, dis-
satisfaction and jealousy between the two provinces; and as pregnant with the same effects,
do your Petitioners regard the depriving of the Legislature of Lower Canada of the power
to raise any duties on importation, into that province without the previous communica-
tion of any projected law for that purpose to the Government of Upper Canada, and the
transmission of it to England for the approval of Government there: the more considera-
tion your Petitioners bestow on the subject, the more confirmed is their conviction
that instead of palliative remedies, an effectual and complete remedy should be resorted
to, and this can only be found by the union of the provinces under one Legislature.

That as British subjects, and persons whose interests are deeply involved in the pros-
perity of the provinces, your Petitioners cannot view the present state of affairs and
their inevitable result without the most serious apprehensions. Situated as the Canadas
are with respect to the United States of America, it is the interest of Great Britain to
give as rapid a development to the resources of these provinces as they are capable of, and
augment and increase their strength as much as possible, with a view to their continuing
a distinct portion of America, secure under British protection, and furnishing Great
Britain the means of exercising an important influence over that country, in such a
manner as circumstances may render expedient. In furtherance of this object, it would
be obviously fit that a communion of feeling and an identity of political views, with a
sense of increased strength and importance, should, as far as can be produced, prevail in
the two provinces; this policy is altogether counteracted by a division which tends to in-
crease the opposition of the inhabitants of Lower Canada to the institutions, habits and
feelings of those of Upper Canada, while the latter, becoming gradually more estranged
from their sister province, must be naturally and imperceptibly drawn into closer ties of
connection, with the adjoining states, whose inhabitants have the same laws, language,
habits and manners; whereas, by the union of the provinces, the present divided parts of
the population would be gradually moulded into one common mass, with the same politi-
cal views and feelings, ready to act in concert, and to combine their resources for their
common defence.

That from the state of the representation in Lower Canada, a very large body of His
Majesty's subjects, amounting, it is estimated, to 80,000 souls of British birth or of
British descent, are unrepresented in the Legislature, either directly or indirectly; His
Majesty's subjects of French descent having it in their power to exclude, and actually
excluding